

you might call me unwise as to guarding my peace of mind.) They talked of "systems" for teaching reading, until the Copernican and Newtonian systems of my own cult were beggared in profundity by comparison. At length I lost my philosophic equanimity and blurted out, "The best way to teach reading is to teach it, and not perplex the child's mind with a tangled mass of shorthand notes, diacritical marks, and demi-semi-quavers, such as you have in Capt. Swinton's series." A very modest gentleman in gold-bowed spectacles was more than half agreed with me, but ventured to correct me as to the authorship of the trashy books. It was not Capt. Swinton of Honolulu who had the discredit of the distracting jumble of didactics referred to. I was glad to hear this, not being willing to harbor undeserved resentment against a fellow-citizen. "When I was a boy," (you must always look out for wisdom after this preface), I resumed, "the readers given us to study whenever we were through our 'a, b, c's' were filled with useful information in natural and political history, together with bits of the masterpieces of English poetry. If we ran against a hard word it was the teacher's part to stay by us until we could pronounce it correctly, and understand its meaning and connection, so that besides getting indelible impressions of accurate orthography, etymology, and orthoepy upon our plastic minds, we were having laid the foundations of a broad intelligence and a liberal education. Thus equipped we have been less of a nuisance to the teachers and preachers, the politicians and editors, whom it has been our fortune or misfortune to encounter in after life, because however we might have worried these worthy people with what they might deem to be erratic 'ologies' or 'isms,' we have not exasperated them with proof that in dealing with us they were vainly endeavoring to inculcate knowledge in graven images. I mean those of that rising generation who were superior to stocks and stones in receptivity of intellect at the beginning, and for whom there could not be anything hoped but the fate of blockheads all through the chapter. When children are presented you for tuition in circumstances promising only the opportunity of a common school education, do not rob them of their time in making them puzzle out the significance of those disfigurements of Swinton, allied as they are with such puerilities of literature as: 'Billy has a yellow dog'; 'It is a good beast'; 'Fanny has a pet goat'; 'She lets it follow her to school'; and similar incentives to imbecility. Give them books of information and teach them the sounds and meanings of the words as you go along. Do not batter algebra, and geometry, and Latin, into their heads, at least until you are sure that they have a grounding in reading, writing, and arithmetic which will never depart from their understandings. If they have so much as this, they will never be part of an ignorant class in the world should they have to go out from your hands to earn their living by daily labor, and they will have a more thorough basis for the higher education should it be their better fortune to have the entry to colleges and universities." The solemn faces of the pedagogues relaxed in astonishment at hearing so presumptuous an effort in their professional style from a nomadic amateur in social science, and the pan-intellectual conference was on my own motion adjourned, ostensibly to give the educators time to prepare a refutation of the argument, but in reality because I feared I could not survive a separate lecture from each of them in their confirmed sesquipedalian diction. I shall be glad to hear them in detail after the holidays.

POLITICAL INCONSISTENCIES OF THE DAY.

EDITOR BULLETIN:—Much has of late been said and written, wise and otherwise, about the professions of the principles enunciated through the platforms of the several factions by courtesy designated political parties. As is usual, preceding a general election we have, in addition to the building of political platforms, the amusingly pathetic pantomime of honorable gentlemen whose dainty digits would be disgraced at any other time by a more plebeian occupation than cutting off coupons, now handshaking and hobnobbing with the "bone and sinew," the "horny handed sons of toil," etc., etc., whom at all other times they affect to despise. We see the

oft repeated farce of the conceited Kamaaina, who himself, or whose father before him, may have been a "shipped" cowboy, a deserting whaler, or a traveller here for his health, now mingling his self-inflated aristocracy with Malihinis, whom to look upon at any other portion of the biennial period with aught but contempt, and as anything but "adventurers," would have been considered a lasting disgrace, unworthy a true Kamaaina. We see those members of the politico-religious club whose occupation (except on the first day of the week) is computing compound interest against the few kuleanas yet remaining in native hands, now tuning their jaws and trimming their pens in persuading their "dear Hawaiian friends," from pulpit and press, of their undying love for them. We see even the planters, in congress assembled, solemnly proclaiming that they want to restrict Chinese—for which seriocomic side-show their own mothers brand these philanthropic gentlemen as successful rivals of Ananias. We see the Government, "honorable" gentlemen all, whose friends two years ago sent to Parliament to support them forty-seven members out of an elective house of forty-eight—the same honorable gentlemen who, with a two-thirds majority always at their back, allowed the Chinese Amendment (so called) to be hoisted by a vote of three to two—now fairly howling, actually screaming, for species of Chinese restriction far exceeding in severity the conditions of the proposed amendment of 1888. Yet by some strange application of the "double-shuffle" doctrine successfully straining every nerve to dump twelve hundred Japanese coolies per month upon our shores—a race, as experience here has proven, with fewer and lesser virtues, with more and greater vices (from an industrial standpoint), than the Chinese, and embracing a much more powerful element of danger and destruction to the white and native skilled labor and small trade industries. In fact the times seem fairly out of joint with the inconsistencies developed by the several factional declarations of principles styled "platforms," when these are considered in connection with their several architects.

And yet a close analysis shows these platforms more inconsistent each with itself, though taken broadly (with the exception of the "franchise plank") those of the Government, the Mechanics' Union and the Kalaiaia (all which are thus far in the field) agree with the general trend of the Reform platform of 1887. Not even the upholders of the present Nobles system have pretended to connect the benefits claimed for an Upper House (the creation of a limited franchise) as a check on hasty legislation, with a mongrel parliament where a moiety of the members thus created are dumped among and intermingled with those returned by a purely popular vote. Not even those who made the Constitution of '87 dare say that the unequal franchise was intended or hoped to be a permanent political fixture in its now existing shape. It was advocated for a present political purpose, and that purpose was well served. It was at best an experiment, which its strongest advocates even now admit might be improved upon. And for the reason, among others, that the Government platform entirely ignores it (though both branches of the fusionists strongly insist on a change), a discussion of it is not here contemplated.

All parties are agreed, by the record, that we want "good government," economy, efficiency and honesty in all the departments; liberal, yet judicious, expenditures on internal improvements; such supervision of the public health as will conduce to the highest degree of public safety; an educational system, supported by taxation, which will keep abreast the spirit of the times; in short, measures which will result in the greatest good to the greatest number, or, as the Reform platform of '87 has it, government from the people, by the people, for the people. But most especially are all parties (by the record, again) agreed on these three points: (1) National independence; (2) Chinese restriction; (3) Decentralization of power. Taking the last of these first, nothing is more plain than what the BULLETIN has previously advocated: that the plank of the Kalaiaia and Mechanics' platforms, namely the election of the "chief executive officers of the Government," is simply a vigorous protest against the determined centralization with which the Government by legislation, "regulations," "rules," "orders," etc., have been tying up the people ever since June 30, 1887. This vigorous protest, backed by a very large proportion of the "Reformers" of '87, has brought the centralizationists down from their perch, and they now propose to advocate a system of municipal government, which is exactly, in effect, what the Mechanics' and Kalaiaia demand—in both cases the details being matter for future deliberation. As to the Chinese question, the Government are even more fierce and radical than the Mechanics; and so with their friends the planters! Of course, Sir, we are going by the record of professions; but, as the BULLETIN has more than once stated, the political platform of the party in power must be taken from their political acts; and their professions are to be received cum

grano, except on newly arising questions, where the two do not coincide. This sound political maxim equally applies on the Independence question; and among other things to be settled by the people next February is this: whether they can consistently intrust the destinies of the nation in the hands of men who two years ago took office under a pledge of protecting the autonomy of the kingdom inviolate; who two months ago attempted to sell the country's independence for a mess of pottage to the planters, and the privilege, to the people, of being shot down by foreign soldiery if they ever dared attempt the redress of wrongs forced upon them by the vendors or their "constitutional" successors; and who two weeks ago again conclude (and confide to their Hilo brethren) that Hawaiian Independence is the one thing altogether lovely—but not, mark you, till after notice duly received from the chief plotter who in this instance, at least, has been grossly misrepresenting the country at Washington, that the determined opposition of the King and the native people had put a temporarily impassable barrier before the scheme designed to transform these islands, politically and industrially, into a colony of Asiatic serfs, where the rich may become richer, and the poor must become poorer. And while on the subject of inconsistency between the records of profession and practice, it seems strange to a disinterested observer that although now within a very few weeks of election there is no regular "Government" party in the field in any part of the country, by latest advices. Do the Government intend letting things go by default? It is notable that a large number of the "Reform" party of '87 are so disgusted with the very name "Reform" that it is seriously advised to change the name of the party—and this even by leading workers in its ranks. And on the outside islands, "Reform" conventions have either advocated or formally nominated straight out opponents of the present Government.

The above are a few of the most glaring inconsistencies of commission. That such are always more easily fastened upon the party in power goes without saying. Perhaps they may be satisfactorily explained to the majority before February 30th. But the acts of omission, though perhaps not so glaring, are yet more numerous, and are not confined to the party in power. They appear on the face to be very serious on the part of all sections of the opposition as well—so much so that there seems room for an entirely independent political party to run a successful campaign here, if "platforms" count for anything, by simply ignoring all but two or three main planks of those platforms already before the electorate, and filling up by more important matters which in the wrangle over the "Chinese" and "Independence" questions, the other parties have entirely lost sight of. Chief among these is the unequal taxation system, and the crying exception for a liberal homestead exemption law, similar to those in vogue in all progressive states of the world except (and of course we are progressive) Hawaii. With your permission these will be made the subject of a further communication.

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